IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-5, without prejudice.

Please add the following new claims 6-17 to read as follows:

6. (New) An image processing apparatus including a storing meansunit for storing image data and performing an output process based on the image data stored in the storing meansunit, comprising a controller including:

means for designating the image data stored in the storing meansunit, and accepting an instruction for concealment of the designated image data,

means for concealing the designated image data based on the accepted instruction, and

means for nullifying unconcealed image data.

7. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the controller further comprises:

means for detecting whether or not a processing meansunit for processing the image data is provided and an operation state thereof, and

means for determining a concealing method based on detected results.

8. (New) An image processing apparatus including a storing meansunit for storing image data and performing an output operation based on the image data stored in the storing meansunit, comprising a controller including:

means for designating the image data stored in the storing meansunit, and accepting an instruction for concealment of the designated image data,

means for detecting whether or not a processing meansunit for processing the image data is provided and an operation state thereof,

means for determining a concealing method based on detected results, and

means for concealing the designated image data by means of the determined method based on the accepted instruction.

9.(New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the concealing method is encrypting the image data, and

the controller includes

means for decoding encrypted image data in the case of performing an output operation based on the image data.

10. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the concealing method is setting of authentication information encrypting to the image data,

the controller further comprises:

means for accepting authentication information;

means for verifying the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted authentication information; and

means for permitting the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication information, and

the controller decodes encrypted image data in the case of performing an output operation based on the image data.

11. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the concealing method is encrypting the image data, and

the controller

decodes encrypted image data in the case of performing an output operation based on the image data.

12. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein

a concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, and

the controller

accepts authentication information,

verifies the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted
authentication information, and

permits the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication
information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication
information.

13. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, and

the controller

accepts authentication information,

verifies the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted
authentication information, and

permits the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication
information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication
information.

14. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, and

the controller

accepts authentication information,

verifies the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted
authentication information, and

permits the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication
information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication
information.

15. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein

    the concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, and

    the controller

    accepts authentication information,

    verifies the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted

        authentication information, and

    permits the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication

        information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication

        information.

16. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein

    concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, and

    the controller

    accepts authentication information,

    verifies the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted

        authentication information, and

    permits the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication

        information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication

        information.

17. (New) The image processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein

the concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, and

the controller

accepts authentication information,

verifies the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted

authentication information, and

permits the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication

information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication

information.